

## MONTANA CIRCLE OF AMERICAN MASTERS

# New members join roster of MCAM artists

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The Montana Arts Council recently added to Montana's Circle of American Masters (MCAM) in the Visual Folk and Traditional Arts by endorsing two artists who will join the roll call of other Montana folk and traditional artists whom the program has honored.

Through their close connections to the physical and social landscape, these artists each reflect what it means to be Montanan.

### Scott Enloe, Woodworking

Great Falls artist Scott Enloe gained a passion for woodworking as a child in a home where his father and uncles involved him in daily activities like building both model and real airplanes, wood toys, furniture, bicycles and cars.

Although he continued on his creative path in music, becoming a freelance professional trombonist and bandleader, his passion for wood re-emerged when he purchased his first home and his own

woodworking tools. That passion would feed his decision to leave his corporate job to become a full-time woodworker, and he has never looked back.

Enloe continues to build furniture, having worked with master chair-builder Sam Maloof. Through working with furniture, he

also became intrigued with building wooden boats.

He and his family bought a canoe and rediscovered their love of Montana and its waters, which in turn fed his deepening interest in cedar-strip canoe building. This led Scott to build his first wood boat, a kayak for his wife. Since then, he has continued to learn about the craft, expanding and perfecting his knowledge of the art of creating fine canoes.

This artist finds the feedback from his customers essential to his own learning process because it helps him improve what he creates. He generously shares his knowledge, helping others learn about the joys of owning and using finely crafted wood canoes and furniture.



Woodworker Scott Enloe

Enloe has helped a troop of 13 Boy Scouts each build their own canoe, and he was a regular at the History Museum's Cottonwood Festival where he demonstrated the building of a cedar-strip canoe.

He continues to offer free wood-canoe instructions in both Great Falls and Missoula, in addition to creating "build-your-own" canoe kits for interested individuals.

He has donated a canoe to the Montana Wildlife Federation for fundraising, was selected to participate in the National and the Montana Folk Festival for two years, is a regular at the Jay Contway Show in Great Falls, and was selected to show in the Lake Home and Cabin Show in Minneapolis.

### Brenda Hermunstad Yirsa, Quilts

Big Sandy art quilter Brenda Hermunstad Yirsa became interested in quilt construction over 20 years ago because of a desire to make

traditional quilts in the style of her three quilt-making grandmothers. After rescuing fabric scraps from her mother-in-law's stash, she dove in, learning much from her own mistakes and even more from the advice of experienced quilt makers who

shared their knowledge with her.

Since that time, Yirsa's work as evolved from the traditional form to an art-quilt style reminiscent of both abstract and realist paintings. The appeal of fabric over more traditional media lies in the pleasure of touching the fabric as she works. She has become immersed in quilt making as a way to paint with fabric.

Yirsa continues to study quilts of the past because she believes that it is very important to have an understanding of where this art form came from, and to think about women of the past who have made marvelous works with needle, thread, and fabric. It is the history of women making beautiful things with



Quilter Brenda Hermunstad Yirsa

what they had available in their homes, even though they did not become celebrities in the art world.

This artist has taught her daughter and a niece to quilt, in addition to teaching adult classes in quilting and speaking about the art of quilts on numerous occasions. Yirsa has designed small quilt patterns that sell across the U.S. and has been an active member of the Big Sandy Guild. She has displayed her quilts in a number of shows, including the "granddaddy of quilt shows" in Houston, TX.

The Montana Circle of American Masters is a program designed to honor Montana's rich heritage and to showcase the present-day vitality of the folk arts. These artists will join other artists endorsed by the Montana Arts Council to be honored in a ceremony at the State Capitol in May 2014.

Artists designated as MCAM artists can use the MCAM label on their work and will have opportunities to teach their art through demonstrations and workshops and to share their knowledge and work in a number of ways, including on the MAC website.

In addition to acknowledgement through interviews, they will gain exposure in promotional and educational venues; and, as funding permits, their work will be photographically recorded.

For inclusion in this program, made possible initially with funding from a National Endowment for the Arts initiative, an individual must be a practicing visual folk artist. Montanans are encouraged to visit the MAC website ([www.art.mt.gov](http://www.art.mt.gov)), to check MCAM eligibility requirements and download the guidelines and nomination form.

For more information or for help in the nomination process, contact Folk Arts and Market Specialist Cindy Kittredge, at 406-468-4078 or [ckittredge@mt.gov](mailto:ckittredge@mt.gov).



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### The Art of Leadership: Easy access for webinars

If you miss one of the Montana Arts Council's Leadership Institute webinars, the will be archived at [www.art.mt.gov/orgs/orgs\\_artsorgresources.asp](http://www.art.mt.gov/orgs/orgs_artsorgresources.asp).

You can now access:

- How Strong Is Your Social Net?
- Accessible Websites
- Employee or Independent Contractor?

Soon to come:

- Building Arts Participation.

## Poet Laureate (from page 1)

Her Montana roots reach deep. She was born on the Hi-Line where her family farmed south of Inverness near the Marias River. Both maternal and paternal grandparents homesteaded in the area, and her great grandfather was a carpenter in the Butte mines.

"Perhaps because of these long ties to the state, I have spent considerable time researching Montana's literary heritage, particularly its poetry," she says. Her essays concerning Montana poets and writers have appeared in *Drumlummon Views* and *State of the Arts* and are forthcoming in two anthologies: *Mythology and Modern Women Poets: Analysis, Reflection and Teaching* and *Reading Montana Poetry*.

Haaland has been teaching creative writing at Montana Women's Prison since 2008 and she coordinates a writing-in-the-schools program for Arts Without Boundaries, and serves on that organization's board of directors. Modeled after the work of the Missoula Writing Collaborative, this program allows a poet to work with third grade students once a week for a period of 12 weeks.

She's also a board member of Reflections West (a program produced by Montana Public Radio) and Rimrock Opera, and is an advisory board member for *Aerie International*, an arts and literary journal produced at Big Sky High School in Missoula.

Haaland co-founded and co-edited five issues of *Stone's Throw Magazine* with fiction

writer Russell Rowland, and has received awards from the Montana Arts Council and Humanities Montana.

Her poetry has appeared in *Calyx*, *High Desert Journal*, *South Dakota Review* and other periodicals, and also online in The Writer's Almanac and Verse Daily. Two poems from *When We Wake in the Night* will be featured on American Life in Poetry, sponsored by The Poetry Foundation, in 2013. In addition, her work has been anthologized in a dozen places.

Dana Gioia, a poet and former chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, wrote: "Tami Haaland's poems may begin in the quotidian details of domestic life, but they unfold into moments of quiet epiphany. She sets her poems in the austere landscape and small towns of the western mountain states, but her real subject is the human heart and mind."

In her new role, Haaland says she plans to focus on community outreach, using the resources already available through Humanities Montana and the Montana Arts Council, such as the Speaker's Bureau, the Artists' Registry and the Poetry Out Loud program.

"I am also interested in the possibility of creating some means of connecting communities to a wide variety of poets and writers who can provide readings, performances and discussions of literature. I believe my strengths as an arts advocate and facilitator, as well as my knowledge of the state and its writers, will allow me to be of service," she writes.

### Cherry Stone

By Tami Haaland

from *When We Wake in the Night*

A small room fills with music,  
rolling hills of sung melody. I eat toast  
and jam, drink tea. Life, it appears,  
is simple, and I simply live  
at my desk, waiting for the next  
good book, the next song, the next.

Why, then, do I want to drive my car  
into the western sun, defy gravity,  
breathe underwater, know the rhythm  
of gills? Why, when I find a seed  
in my jam, must I summon the dark earth  
that engendered the tree, the roots  
navigating a thousand years of humus  
to produce this moment's fruit?

Alcosser is confident that Haaland will serve the state "with the same care and attention of heart and mind that one witnesses in her poetry."

"To be honest, I don't know how Tami is able to achieve all that she does with such a sense of equanimity and good humor, but I am deeply grateful for her gifts."